

Statement delivered by
Her Excellency Olaug Vervik Bollestad
Minister for Agriculture and Food of the Kingdom of Norway
on the occasion of the
42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)
15 June 2021

Chair,

This year the FAO Conference takes place in a global pandemic. People all over the world struggle and millions more are food insecure. This is not acceptable.

This year is also the year of the Food Systems Summit. The preparations, the pre-Summit and the Summit itself are essential for mobilizing political support for innovative and game-changing solutions. This is important both at the national and the global level.

These solutions must deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We trust FAO will extend its full support to the remaining Summit preparations, as well as the system of follow-up.

Chair,

Our food systems are put at risk by climate change, conflicts, loss of biodiversity and outbreaks of diseases. The poor and vulnerable suffer the most.

As the United Nations specialized agency in food and agriculture, FAO is key to meet these challenges. We need a strong FAO, building on its expertise and knowledge, fully in line with the UN-reform.

To end hunger, all actions must be grounded in human rights, in particular the right to food, leaving no-one behind and ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment. We would like to see these principles clearly reflected in FAO's vision and the future work of the organisation.

Chair,

Norway would like to highlight some key priorities:

Firstly,
Sustainable management and use of natural resources for agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry is key, including climate change adaptation and mitigation. FAO plays a vital role in providing a knowledge base for sustainable forest management. We trust that FAO will continue to provide the main source of information on forest resources.

We need to realize the ocean's potential. Norway and the other partners in The High Level Ocean Panel are committed to implement the necessary means to that end, and we welcome the contribution of FAO.

Secondly,

Seed diversity is fundamental to food security. The realization of farmers' rights is an important part. Last year, I welcomed the deposit of seeds from 35 gene banks in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. I hope more gene banks will make use of this to secure their important seed collections.

Thirdly,

Antimicrobial resistance is one of the greatest global health threats. Infectious diseases become more difficult or impossible to treat. The AMR challenge can only be solved through a One Health approach. We call on FAO to take its position in the global collaboration on AMR.

The goal must be prudent and responsible use of antibiotics. Good agricultural and animal husbandry practices, hygiene measures and biosecurity are fundamental. We must end all use of antibiotics as growth promoters and as routine prophylaxis in animal food production.

Finally chair, let me affirm Norway's commitment to FAO's work. I wish everyone the best for this Conference.

Thank you!